



**FSC Certification Report for the  
2007 Annual Audit of:**

**Wisconsin County Forest Program  
Managed by Wisconsin DNR**

**Certificate Number: SCS-FM/COC-0083G**

**Under the  
SCS Forest Conservation Program  
(An FSC-Accredited Certification Program)**

**Date of Field Audit: June 13-15, 2007  
Date of Report: August 7, 2007; Final Oct 16, 2007**

**Scientific Certification Systems  
2000 Powell Street  
Suite 1350  
Emeryville, CA 94608**

**SCS Contact: Dave Wager, Program Director**  
dwager@scscertified.com

**Client Contact: Jeff Barkley**

Section 2.0 (Surveillance Decision and Public Record) will be made publicly available on the SCS website ([www.scscertified.com](http://www.scscertified.com)) no later than 60 days after the report is finalized.

## **1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **1.1 CONTACT INFORMATION**

- Wisconsin DNR, County Forest Program
- Contact person: Jeff Barkley
- Address: 101 S. Webster St., P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921
- Telephone: (608) 264-9217
- Fax: (608) 266-8576
- E-mail: jeffrey.barkley@wisconsin.gov

### **1.2 General Background**

The audit included a review of three Wisconsin Counties: Washburn, Sawyer, and Barron. This report covers the 2nd surveillance audit, following the 2005 certification of the WI County Forest Program (WCFP). Typically surveillance audits are conducted at a rate of one per year, beginning the year following award of certification.

The 2007 audit was conducted pursuant to the FSC guidelines for annual audits as well as the terms of the forest management certificate awarded by Scientific Certification Systems in 2005 (SCS-FM/COC-083G). All certificates issued by SCS under the aegis of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) require annual audits to ascertain ongoing compliance with the requirements and standards of certification. The full report of the initial evaluation is available on the SCS website.

[http://www.scs-certified.com/forestry/forest\\_certclients.html](http://www.scs-certified.com/forestry/forest_certclients.html).

Pursuant to FSC and SCS guidelines, annual/surveillance audits are not intended to comprehensively examine the full scope of the certified forest operations, as the cost of a full-scope audit would be prohibitive and it is not mandated by FSC audit protocols. Rather, annual audits are comprised of three main components:

- A focused assessment of the status of any outstanding conditions or corrective action requests
- Follow-up inquiry into any issues that may have arisen since the award of certification
- As necessary given the breadth of coverage associated with the first two components, an additional focus on selected topics or issues, the selection of which is not known to the certificate holder prior to the audit.

At the time of the June 2007 annual audit, there were 6 open Corrective Action Requests, the status of WI County Forest Program's response to these CARs was a major focus of the annual audit (see discussion, below for a listing of those CARs and their disposition as a result of this annual audit).

The counties enrolled in FSC certification at the time of the 2007 surveillance audit, and their acreages, are listed in table 1.

Table 1: FSC Certified Counties

County	Acreage
Ashland	39,970.23
Barron	15,864.69
Chippewa	33,106.91
Clark	132,851.44
Eau Claire	52,310.82
Florence	36,670.43
Forest	10,848.19
Iron	173,400.94
Jackson	120,904.25
Juneau	15,186.44
Oconto	43,555.82
Price	92,266.59
Sawyer	113,802.91
Taylor	17,590.30
Washburn	149,000.91
Wood	37,592.57
Total	1,084,924

Following the 2007 audit, the WI County Forest Program approved the enrollment of Lincoln County (100,845 acres) into the FSC group. SCS was presented with this information, and officially recognized Lincoln County as part of the group on July 2, 2007. Lincoln County will be audited as part of the 2008 surveillance audit.

### **1.3 Guidelines/Standards Employed**

For this annual audit, the SCS audit team evaluated the extent of conformance with the FSC Lake States Regional Standard Version 3.0.

## **2.0 SURVEILLANCE DECISION AND PUBLIC RECORD**

### **2.1 Assessment Dates**

Since the 2005 award of certification, there were audit activities undertaken on the following dates:

- On January 29, 2006 Jeff Barkley submitted (via email) a written description of actions taken by WCFP in response to the 11 outstanding CARs.

- On February 7-9, 2006 an SCS audit team (Wager and Ferrucci) conducted the annual audit of WCFP, including on-site inspections of field operations as well as extensive interviews with WCFP management and field personnel.
- Some additional consultations with DNR staff were completed following the field portion of the assessment
- On June 8, 2007 Jeff Barkley submitted (via e-mail) a written description of actions taken by WCFP in response to the remaining 6 open CARs.
- June 13-15, 2007 (Wager and Ferrucci) conducted the annual audit of WCFP, including on-site inspections of field operations as well as extensive interviews with WCFP management and field personnel.
- July 2, 2007 review of information regarding Lincoln County's enrollment into FSC group
- August 8 and 9, 2007 Interviews with Loren Ayers and Randy Hoffman of the Bureau of Endangered Resources

## **2.2 Assessment Personnel**

For this annual audit, the team was comprised of Dave Wager and Mike Ferrucci. Both Mr. Wager and Mr. Ferrucci were part of the 2004 full evaluation as well as the 2003 preliminary evaluation and the 2006 annual audit, thus providing for good continuity.

### **Dave Wager**

Mr. Wager is Director of Forest Management Certification for SCS. During his 6.5 years as Director, Mr. Wager has overseen the day-to-day operations of the program and conducted Forest Management and Chain-of-Custody evaluations throughout the world. Recent evaluations conducted by Mr. Wager include Minnesota DNR, Wisconsin County Forests, State of PA Bureau of Forestry, State of Massachusetts, Perak ITC- Malaysia, and Collins Pine Lakeview and Almanor Forests. In his role as Program Director, Mr. Wager oversees all first-time certification evaluations, annual audits, and contract renewal certifications on approximately 60 active clients. Mr. Wager has expertise in business and forest ecology (B.S. business, Skidmore College; M.S. Forest Resources, Utah State University) and utilizes both in his position with SCS. While studying forest ecology at Utah State University, Mr. Wager was awarded a NASA Graduate Student Research Fellowship to develop dendrochronological techniques to assess Douglas-fir growth in Utah's Central Wasatch Mountains.

### **Michael Ferrucci**

Michael Ferrucci is a founding partner and President of Interforest, LLC, and a partner in Ferrucci & Walicki, LLC, a land management company that has served private landowners in southern New England for 16 years. Its clients include private citizens, land trusts, municipalities, corporations, private water companies, and non-profit organizations. He has a B.Sc. degree in forestry from the University of Maine and a Master of Forestry degree from the

Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Mr. Ferrucci's primary expertise is in management of watershed forests to provide timber, drinking water, and the protection of other values; in forest inventory and timber appraisal; hardwood forest silviculture and marketing; and the ecology and silviculture of natural forests of the eastern United States. He also lectures on private sector forestry, leadership, and forest resource management at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Mike Ferrucci served as a team member on the 2003 Full Evaluation of Wisconsin State Forests

## 2.3 Assessment Process

The following general steps were undertaken as part of the 2007 audit:

- Review of 2005 and 2006 certification reports
- Review of information supplied by selected Counties (Management plans and responses to CARs)
- Completion of the field audit
- Synthesis of findings, and judging performance relative to the FSC Lake States Standard
- Presentation of results
- Preparation of the written certification evaluation report, and this public summary

The field portion of the audit included a broad array of field sites designed to illustrate a cross-section of stand types and treatments, focusing on harvests and other site disturbing activities conducted within the last couple years. During the field audit, the SCS auditors engaged in extensive personal interviews with County and DNR staff and contractors.

<b>Washburn County</b>	<b>Wednesday, June 13</b>	<b>FSC and SFI</b>
Dave Wager	SCS, FSC Lead Auditor, SFI Auditor	
Paul Pingrey	DNR Forest Certification Coordinator	
Mike Peterson	Washburn County Forest Administrator	
Jim Pearson	DNR Liaison	
Buck Pettingill	Assistant Administrator	
Jeremy Erickson	Forestry Technician	
Dave Bailey	DNR Forester- Spooner	
Joe Menkol	DNR Forester/Ranger	
Nancy Christel	DNR Wildlife Biologist	
Harold Smith	Forest Tech II	
Duran Bjorklund	Washburn Co. Forest, Forester	

### **Washburn County Field Sites**

1. Tract #34-04, Contract # 3829, 73-acre oak improvement cut. First thinning of this stand. Eventual goal is shelterwood regeneration. Thin from below and crop tree release on 2+ sides. Basal area reduced from 140 to 80 sq ft. Typed as AAt- higher oak quality. Managed ATV/snowmobile trail within unit.
2. Same 17-acre clearcut of 75 year old aspen with oak retention. AAt habitat type. Even-aged treatment with objective to maintain aspen type for timber and wildlife values.
3. Tract 40-04, Contract # 3795, 80-acre oak improvement cut (active). Very hilly topography. Thin from below and crop tree release. Basal area reduced from ~120 to ~85 sq ft. Managed ATV/snowmobile trail within unit. Logging contractor interview- Jim Smith Lennix Lumber.

4. Same, 23-acre aspen clearcut. Mature aspen stand good retention of pine, black ash pockets and larger oaks.
  5. 2-acre birch scarification—some birch regeneration as well as aspen (seed origin).
  6. Tract 2-05, Contract #3791, 34-acre aspen (70 years) clearcut. Completed fall/winter 2006-2007. Good retention of white pine, swamp ash/tamarack. Aesthetic buffer zone along County B. Shadow Lake buffered. Adherence to guidance of keeping equipment out of vernal pool/wetland. No residual vegetation around wetland/vernal pool. Steep skid trails brushed, no water bars (erosion minimal)
  7. Same, 2-acre oak improvement thin. Buffer on Shadow Lake
  8. Tract 4-05, Contract #3787. 70-acre jack pine budworm salvage and red pine thin
  9. Tract 17-04, Contract #3807, 22-acre aspen clearcut partially complete. Contractor had shut himself down before any significant rutting. Retention scattered oak and conifers. Dearth of coarse woody debris.
  10. Same, oak improvement thin marked but uncut.
  11. Tract #30-06, Contract #3811, 39-acre red pine stand 2nd thinning
  12. Adjacent to Tract #30-06 Minong CCC Camp HCVF Area
- Other stops: Saw 3 different understory burns following oak thin to set back succession of red maple and other hardwoods. All appeared fairly effective

<b><u>Sawyer County</u></b>	<b><u>Thursday, June 14 FSC and SFI</u></b>
Dave Wager	SCS, FSC Lead Auditor, SFI Auditor
Mike Ferrucci	NSF-ISR, SFI Lead Auditor, FSC Auditor
Jeff Barkley	DNR County Forest Specialist
Paul Pingrey	DNR Forest Certification Coordinator
Mike Luedeke	DNR Spooner
Tom Duke	Regional Staff Supervisor, DNR Antigo
Larry Glodoski	Area Forestry Supervisor, DNR Hayward
Pete Wisdom	DNR Sawyer/Rusk Team Leader
Shirley Riedmann	Sawyer County Forestry Committee Member
Greg Peterson	Sawyer County Forest Administrator
Pete Sievert	Sawyer County Forest Assistant Administrator
David Todus	Sawyer County Forester
Jeff Steidl	Sawyer County Forester
Nick Koltz	DNR Liaison
Dee Dobiles	Secretary (100% forestry since last year)

### **Sawyer County Field Sites**

1. (Dave and Mike) Tract #28-06, Sale # 2499-06 Intermediate thinning, logging started, logger left, so temp. closure, oak mostly 5-11", some 11-15"; Rx BA from 120-78; reviewed Sawyer County Timber Sale Inspection Report" and "PreStartup Meeting with Contractor" form;
2. (Dave and Mike) Tract #13-05; Sale 2436-05: Completed salvage and intermediate thinning; not closed out; high area bordered by Birkebeiner Trail; adjacent oak borer salvage, and some salvage was done in this sale, but mostly typical selection harvest
3. (Mike Ferrucci) Camp Smith Lake "z" reserve stand steep slope above the lake, which is a Class A lake; z is essentially reserve, as it is removed from the stand selection process for protection purposes.
4. (Mike Ferrucci) Camp Smith Access site: confirmed road and sign; discussed maintenance activities
5. (Mike Ferrucci) Tract #25-06, Sale 2496: 84 acre active timber harvest 10% cut; N. hardwood single-tree selection and crop-tree release; has oak component; interview with Dane Amundson, hand fell and forwarded; good residual stand, healthy, vigorous, well-spaced; saw retained wildlife trees.
6. (Mike Ferrucci) Tract # 7-05, Sale 2430-05: Third thin in 60-year old red pine plantation, cut 1/3 of basal area from below; processor harvest; long term goal maintain as red pine plantation.
7. (Mike Ferrucci) Aspen clearcut with good green-tree retention (conifers) pictures by P.P.; discussed aspen management: designate all conifers (except 3-stick Balsam fir), black ash (often clumps or patches), all oak for retention;

8. (Mike Ferrucci) Various aspen harvests observed from vehicle on Tag Alder Road; good regeneration and varied retention.
9. (Dave and Mike) Tract #45-05, Sale 2463-05: 89 acre Northern hardwood stand cut 2006-07 winter, single-tree selection, crop-tree release harvest to transition stand to all-aged condition. Tried to retain and release as many oak as possible, standard designate all merchantable, Aspen, white birch, and red maple for harvest. Told us wildlife retention goal is for 3-5 wildlife trees per acre. Crop-tree release not very aggressive, standard to release on two sides, up to three.
10. (Dave and Mike) Totogatic River State Natural Area and nearby stands with hemlock reserved from treatment for now ("z" designation).
11. (Dave Wager) Tract #4-07, not yet sold: long, bumpy drive to an aspen harvest with designated aspen, birch, soft maple, and 3-stick fir designated for removal, pine only those marked (very selective improvement thin), many "kegs" and wetlands. Good buffer around kegs; good wildlife tree retention
12. (Dave Wager) Tract #29-05, Sale 2452-05: completed red pine thinning. 3rd entry; high basal area; dense hardwood understory
13. (Dave Wager) adjacent to Tract #29-05: jack pine release- harvest aspen, spray competing brush; excellent results for jack pine release

<b>Barron County</b>	<b>Friday, June 15</b>	<b>FSC and SFI</b>
Dave Wager	SCS, FSC Lead Auditor, SFI Auditor	
Jeff Barkley	DNR County Forest Specialist	
Jack Nedland	Barron County Forest Administrator	
Chris Rucinski	DNR Liaison Forester	
Jake Elder	DNR Forester	
Brad Johnson	DNR Forestry Team Leader	
Jim Varro	DNR Area Specialist	
Mike Luedeke	DNR Spooner Regional Forester	

#### **Barron County Field Sites**

1. Tract #4-06, Contract # 313, red pine thinning (1st entry), marked not cut. Volunteer Quality Deer Management Area
  2. Same, mature aspen/birch regeneration harvest, marked not cut
  3. Same, oak thin to set-up shelterwood, marked as true improvement cut, den and snag tree goals were 2-4 per acre.
  4. Same, 20-year big tooth aspen stand. No harvest planned as part of sale, but considered thinning possibility. Discussed longer Recon update period for aspen, lowland conifer, tag alder, and other less dynamic even-aged types.
  5. Red pine planting. 1st planting 1995-1996. Regeneration partially failed, so interplanted in 2000 to fill gaps Tract 2-2005, Sale 305, Oak improvement cut and removal of storm damaged trees. Occasional gap. Pipestone quarry- Native American cultural/archeological site- within sale. 300 ft buffer (8-acres) with no management around sites. Lots of wildlife trees marked, did not observe many without paint. *State Archeologist recently approved County's removal of a squatters camp after being unable to get any verification as to whether it was Tribal—tribes were first contacted before removal, but no response.*
  6. Same, Selection cut view from road Silver Creek stream buffer, only light marking within buffer.
  7. Tract 2-06, Contract #311, Aspen clearcut for fiber and wildlife. Pine and oak retention. Several kegs and swamps within sale. Large amount of small diameter woody debris.
- Same, 1st stage shelterwood of 97+ year oak stand prescribed but delayed because poor acorn crop year.

## **2.4 Status of Extant Corrective Action Requests**

<b>CAR 2004.5 (minor)</b>	<b>Reference: FSC C.6.4</b>
By the year 2 surveillance audit, WCFP must complete the following two phases to ensure full conformance to Criterion 6.4:	
Phase 1: WCFP must work with WI DNR Bureau of Endangered Resources to complete the assessment	

for gaps in representative samples of existing ecosystems within the landscape that are best filled on County Forests.

*Note: Endangered Resources has an approach for summarizing representative sample needs and opportunities by county using the Ecological Landscapes Handbook, Regional Ecological Assessments, Community Restoration & Old Growth, Wisconsin Land Legacy Study, and Nature Conservancy's Great Lakes Ecoregional Plan*

Phase 2: WCFP must initiate the process to formally recognize (this does not prohibit active management) any representative samples identified in Phase 1 that are unique to County Forests and/or clearly best suited for SNA or some other form of special management designation on County Forests.

**Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2005-2006)**

**County Forest Program Response:**

Corrective Action

- *Randy Hoffman to complete assessment of each County Forest and identify gaps of existing ecosystems that may be present on County Forests*
- *Counties identify and implement management to maintain these representative ecosystems in their County Forest Plans*

Progress / Completion

- *07/04 - Randy Hoffman and Rebecca Schroeder of DNR's Bureau of Endangered Resources meet with WCFA's Colette Matthews*
- *Randy Hoffman has had contact with 25 of the 29 counties in the County Forest system as of 12/28/05. This includes 15 of the 16 counties in FSC (Taylor still pending). Some of the counties (e.g. Taylor) have adjacent forests (e.g. Chequamegon-Nicolet N.F.) that satisfy all of the ecological needs within that particular ecological land type.*
- *Identification of these areas crosses over with FSC CAR 2004.10 as it relates to HC VF forests.*
- *Randy Hoffman has met with the County Forest certification committee three times in 2005 to discuss this CAR and 2004.10.*
- *Counties are (have) individually addressing the recommended sites and evaluating the appropriate management on their particular forest.*
- *Identification and proposed management of these areas is encompassed in Chapter 500 and 800 of the County Plans.*

**SCS Findings:** Good progress to-date has been made. Iron and Ashland County have made progress on the CAR through their work with Randy Hoffman of Endangered Resources. It appears the Counties will be able to conform with this CAR by its 2007 surveillance audit due date. A contact log of exchanges between Randy Hoffman and Counties was provided to SCS. The log demonstrates that considerable work identifying opportunities to establish/maintain representative areas on County Forests has been completed to-date. There has been some variability among Counties in their understanding of the utility of representative samples and in the receptiveness of Counties to the process. There is an opportunity for the group manager to ensure all FSC enrolled Counties understand and are receptive to this process.

**Position in the end of this audit: Due at 2007 surveillance audit**

**Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2006- 2007)**

**County Forest Program Response:**

Progress/Completion

Chapters 500 and 800 of the plans for FSC counties contain information on protection of representative ecosystems and special sites. All plans, with the exception of two, have been completed and received preliminary approval.

**SCS Findings:**

SCS verified that the above accomplishments have been realized. Washburn, Sawyer, and Barron counties (subject of this year's audit) demonstrated conformance. A contact log of exchanges between Randy Hoffman and counties was provided to SCS. The log demonstrates that considerable work identifying opportunities to establish/maintain representative areas on County Forests has been completed to-date.

**Status July 2007: Closed**

**CAR 2004.6 (minor)**

**Reference:** FSC Criterion 6.5

By the year 1 surveillance audit, the WCFP must establish clear written criteria for acceptable levels of rutting, compaction, and residual damage, and implement these criteria in their timber sale administration process.

**Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2005-2006)**

**County Forest Program Response:**

Corrective Action

- DNR will settle on a definition of an "excessive rut". Counties will use that definition as a benchmark and apply similar criteria to their local county.
- County determinations will be entered in timber sale contract and County Forest Plan

Progress / Completion

- County Forests letting DNR take lead on this (Carmen Wagner - DNR Hydrologist).
- \*To promote consistency statewide
- 3 drafts of rutting policy for State Forests have been developed
- County Forest certification committee has actively participated in the development of the State policy, providing comments on all 3 drafts. Carmen Wagner has met with committee on two occasions.
- County forest certification committee will evaluate final draft State Forest policy and provide a recommendation to all County Forests on whether to mirror the State policy, or settle upon a slightly different alternative.
- March 3, 2006 WCFA Certification / Legislative committee meeting agenda - Action item

**SCS Findings:** Substantial efforts have been undertaken to address this CAR. An interim rutting standard has been developed by the State that covers the key aspects: location, length, and depth of rut. To develop the interim standard the State used both sound science and public outreach to ensure the standard accomplishes soil and water quality protection goals, and that key participants are willing and able to implement it. The audit team had underestimated the amount of work that was necessary to develop an effective rutting standard. The WCFP is going to meet in March to make a decision on whether to adopt the State interim standard, review the implementation of the current interim standard on State lands, or develop their own standard. Because of the substantial progress to-date by DNR on developing a standard, this CAR is extended by one year.

<b>Position in the end of this audit: Due at 2007 surveillance audit</b>
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2006-2007)</b>
<p><b>County Forest Program Response</b> Progress/Completion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2005-2007 Review of County Forest Plans by Area Forestry Specialists and Central Office County Forest Specialist to ensure follow through in development of rutting policy</li> </ul> <p><b>SCS Findings:</b> Counties have developed and implemented a rutting standard with clear criteria. The standard is based on the one used by the State with some individual county modification. Washburn and Barron Counties had effectively implemented the standard at the time of the audit by including it in new timber contracts. Sawyer County made a commitment to do so for the next bid opening.</p> <p><b>Status July 2007: Closed</b></p>

<b>CAR 2004.8 (minor)</b>	<b>Reference:</b> FSC Indicator 7.3.a.
DNR must expand training programs to include landscape level planning, identification and control of invasive exotic plants, identification and protection of rare/unique plant communities, and identification and protection of cultural resources. Note: "training" does not require formal classes/workshops in every instance; in many cases improving content and distribution of written training material may suffice.	
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2005-2006)</b>	
<p><b>County Forest Program Response:</b> Progress / Completion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Invasive Species of the Upper Midwest - E. Czarapata, has been purchased for all Counties as an excellent reference for identification and management.</i></li> <li><i>Training session on Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive species is an agenda item for March 30-31 WCFA Spring Administrator's Meeting (Instructor Jane Cummings-Carlson, DNR Forest Health).</i></li> <li><i>DNR efforts are progressing on invasive species management. The County Forests are participating in an advisory committee for one of the four tracks (Track 1 - Forestry BMP's for Invasive Species) of DNR's effort to develop BMP's for Invasive Species in Wisconsin.</i></li> <li><i>NHI training for County Forest staff scheduled for Feb. 13 &amp; 14, 2006</i></li> <li><i>The County Forests continue to be very engaged in the Forest and Health status of Wisconsin's forests through contact with DNR's Forest Health staff. Contact includes on-site visits by Regional Forest Health staff, distribution of printed and electronic materials, and presentations by Forest Health staff at County Forest functions.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SCS Findings:</b> As noted above good progress is being made on this CAR. The audit team reviewed training files of Price, Iron, and Ashland County staff. Of particular note, Iron county foresters had recently received training in rare plant identification. All employees had proper BMP training. CAR is due in 2007.</p>	
<b>Position in the end of this audit: Due at 2007 surveillance audit</b>	
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2006-2007)</b>	
<p><b>County Forest Program Response</b> Progress/Completion</p>	

- WCFA Executive Director is on Advisory committee for Forestry Invasives BMP development. In addition, in the summer of 2006 a WCFA representative (Brian Loyd, Asst. Burnett Cty. Administrator) was added to the Technical team that is actually drafting the Forestry invasive BMPs.
- 3/07 Update and additional training on invasive species at WCFA Spring Administrator's meeting by DNR Forest Health coordinator Jane Cummings-Carlson including discussion of firewood policies. In addition, update and additional training by Darrell Zastrow and Tom Boos on invasive plants and invasives BMPs at the same meeting.
- Invasive species information added to the standard RECON collection (WisFIRS project)
- Sawyer, Price, Taylor, and Rusk (SFI-only) are participating in the Upper Chippewa Invasives Species Cooperative. Land Conservation and UW-Extension have been coordinating some of these in cooperation with DNR.
- Four Invasive species ID training sessions scheduled for 9/18, 9/20, 9/25, and 9/27 -2007 for County Forest staff.

**SCS Findings:** The audit team observed that excellent progress was made on this CAR. The WCFP has improved training and capacity building on landscape level planning, identification and control of invasive exotic plants, and identification and protection of rare/unique plant communities. The audit team interviewed staff regarding training, and verified completion of the actions described in the WCFP response. There has been very little action taken to improve the skill of foresters at identification and protection of cultural resources. This CAR will be closed because training occurred in three of the four areas. CAR 2007.1 is stipulated to improve identification and protection of cultural resources, which was not adequately addressed.

**Status July 2007: Closed. Issued follow-up CAR 2007.1**

**CAR 2004.10 (minor)**

**Reference:** FSC Criteria 9.1, 9.2

By the year 2 surveillance audit, WCFP must expand upon the current HCVF process. Either the WI DNR staff or county staffs must define the attributes that merit designation as high conservation value (as set forth in Principle 9 of the Lake States Regional Standard) utilizing:

- knowledge and information that county forestry and regional WI DNR staff possess regarding the local forest management area;
- ecological targets in need of protection (detailed by the Bureau of Endangered Resources), which are derived from the Ecological Landscapes Handbook, Regional Ecological Assessments, Community Restoration & Old Growth, Wisconsin Land Legacy Study, and Nature Conservancy's Great Lakes Ecoregional Plan;
- NHI database;
- information gained through consultations with Bureau of Endangered Resources and other interested local and Statewide stakeholders.

**Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments**

**County Forest Program Response:**

Corrective Action

- Counties will include HCVF sites and the management of same in their County Forest plans. Identification of sites is scheduled for Chapter 530 and management implications are scheduled for Chapter 850.3.
- Consultation between Endangered Resources staff and County Forest personnel to identify these areas. Similar to collaboration ongoing for FSC CAR 2004.5.

Progress / Completion

- *County plan template is complete, originally drafted by Randy Hoffman, Endangered Resources. Section 530 and 850 of the County Forest Plan reference HCVF. Section 530 is intended to identify sites and 850 to identify management needed to retain those sites. Endangered Resources continues to correspond with County Forests to identify gaps in representative ecosystems (see CAR 2004.5) and HCVF opportunities.*
- *Hoffman has met with 25 of 29 counties to identify representative ecosystems and HCVF opportunities. This includes 15 of the 16 FSC counties (Taylor not completed).*
- *County Plans are addressing HCVF but all are not completed / approved as yet.*

**SCS Findings:** Price, Iron, and Ashland 15-year plans include discussions on HCVF. In general counties are making good progress on this CAR through their work with Randy Hoffman of Endangered Resources. There has been some variability in the receptiveness of Counties to the process. There is an opportunity for the group manager to ensure all FSC enrolled Counties are engaging in the HCVF identification process.

**Position in the end of this audit: Due at 2007 audit**

**Action Taken By Certificate Holder/Auditor Comments (2006- 2007)**

**County Forest Program Response:**

Progress/Completion

- *County plan template is complete, originally drafted by Randy Hoffman, Endangered Resources. Section 530 and 850 of the County Forest Plan reference HCVF. Section 530 is intended to identify sites and 850 to identify management needed to retain those sites. Endangered Resources continues to correspond with County Forests to identify gaps in representative ecosystems (see CAR 2004.5) and HCVF opportunities.*
- *Randy Hoffman has met with 25 of 29 counties to identify representative ecosystems and HCVF opportunities. This includes 15 of the 16 FSC counties (Taylor not completed).*
- *County Plans are addressing HCVF but all are not completed / approved as yet. For FSC counties Barron, Chippewa, Florence, and Forest counties are not all full approved however, all have had a preliminary DNR review and with the exception of Chippewa, passed County Board as of 5/07.*
- *All approved plans have included and addressed HCVF's in their plans. This is a significant change from the 1996-2005 County Forest plans.*

**SCS Findings:**

SCS verified that the above accomplishments have been realized. Washburn, Sawyer, and Barron counties (subject of this year's audit) demonstrated conformance. HCVF areas were identified using a set of gap analysis tools developed by Bureau of Endangered Resources in conjunction with recommendations from County and DNR foresters who have detailed knowledge of their respective County Forests. The public was given opportunity to comment on these designations in the management plan. A contact log of exchanges between Randy Hoffman and Counties was provided to SCS. The log demonstrates that considerable work at identifying HCVF on County Forests has been completed to-date. DNR still needs to complete a memorandum of understanding with Jackson, Clark, and Iron counties memorializing DNRs ongoing involvement/interest in the recently established State Natural Areas of these counties.

It is likely that new opportunities for HCVF will arise in the future because Endangered Resources has only conducted a biotic inventory on < 10% of the County Forests. As new areas of HCVF are identified, e.g., old growth or unique plant communities, it is expected that these will be designated as HCVF. See

Recommendation 2007.1.
<b>Status July 2007: Closed</b>

<b>CAR 2004.11 (minor)</b>	<b>Reference:</b> FSC Criterion 9.3
<p>Phase 1: By the time of the year 1 surveillance audit WCFP must develop and implement monitoring protocols designed to assess the effectiveness of existing HCVF.</p> <p>Phase 2: By the year 2 surveillance audit, monitoring protocols to assess the expanded HCVF (resulting form CAR 2004.10) must be in-place.</p>	
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments</b>	
<p><b>County Forest Program Response:</b></p> <p><u>Corrective Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Following DNR's lead the counties will develop monitoring protocols</i></li> <li>• <i>Consultation between Endangered Resources staff and County Forest personnel on most practical methodology</i></li> <li>• <i>DNR Endangered Resources (Hoffman) conduct pilot of Releve' survey plots on select county(s)</i></li> <li>• <i>DNR report back to county forest certification committee on costs of survey</i></li> <li>• <i>Based on feedback from DNR pilot, determine the need and how best to establish Releve' plots on HCVF areas</i></li> </ul> <p><u>Progress / Completion</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Randy Hoffman from DNR Endangered Resources met with the county forest certification committee in Dec. 2005 and agreed to devote 10 days to establishing Releve' plots on select counties.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SCS Findings:</b> Some initial work in response to this CAR is underway, i.e., plans to establish Releve plots in some County HCVF areas. Also, the flora and fauna monitoring, as detailed under CAR 2004.9, addresses HCVF. Phase 2 of this CAR is due at the 2007 surveillance audit.</p>	
<b>Position in the end of this audit:</b> Due 2007 surveillance audit	
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2006- 2007)</b>	
<p><b>County Forest Program Response:</b></p> <p><b>Progress/Completion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Randy Hoffman from DNR Endangered Resources met with the county forest certification committee in Dec. 2005 and agreed to devote 10 days to establishing Releve' plots on select counties.</i></li> <li>• <i>Summer 2006 - Randy Hoffman and County / DNR staff completed 34 releve plots on 6 forests (Juneau, Washburn, Jackson, Price, Lincoln , Rusk (SFI-only))</i></li> <li>• <i>Nov. 2006 - Received report from Randy Hoffman as a result of the releve plot pilot in the Summer of 2006</i></li> <li>• <i>3/28/07 – Certification / Legislative committee meeting – Discussion on implementation and completion of releve plots on HCVF areas. Options: Counties complete independently (if staff qualified &amp; trained), Counties contract for work (using either County funds or County Forest Sustainable grant funding), Counties collectively contract for work using County Forest Sustainable grant funding). No resolution on which option to pursue. Questions were raised as to the frequency</i></li> </ul>	

<p><i>of the monitoring, # of plots necessary, and whose responsibility it was. More information Will discuss again at 6/20/07 WCFA Certification committee meeting. County Forest Sustainable grant application deadline is August 15, 2007.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>It was concluded that Sustainable grant funding could be used for this monitoring.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>SCS Findings:</b> The establishment of releve plots is an effective way to monitor status of HCVF areas. Establishment of an initial 34 plots on 6 forests is evidence of the CAR being implemented. During the 2008 surveillance audit we will assess the continued implementation of this strategy.</p>
<b>Status July 2007: Closed</b>

<b>Background/Justification:</b>	
<b>CAR 2006.1</b>	<p>WCFP will improve its monitoring systems by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. setting targets to bring Recon back into currency- and demonstrating progress on those targets;</li> <li>2. demonstrating continued progress on implementing the improved flora and fauna monitoring framework;</li> <li>3. Expanding chapter 3000 to include the monitoring elements listed in <i>County Forest Program Monitoring &amp; Assessment Protocol</i> and how those provide feedback into management of County Forests.</li> </ol>
<b>Deadline</b>	2007 surveillance audit
<b>Reference</b>	<i>Criterion 8.1 and 8.2</i>
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments (2006-2007)</b>	
<p><b>County Forest Program Response</b> Progress/Completion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>RECON Status information distributed to Counties 3-06</i></li> <li><i>RECON frequency target for County Forests established at 20 years – 6/06</i></li> <li><i>Ecological landscapes and ecological context for each County Forest– Completed and available at <a href="http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/wwap/explore/property.asp">http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/wwap/explore/property.asp</a></i></li> <li><i>Species lists have been developed from Wildlife Action Plan for each County Forests as referenced by their ecological landtype composition – available at – <a href="http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/wwap/plan">http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/wwap/plan</a></i></li> <li><i>Inventory information is now searchable on the Aquatic &amp; Terrestrial Resources Inventory website at: – <a href="http://wiatri.net">http://wiatri.net</a></i></li> <li><i>WisFIRS Phase 1 development 4-06 through present. In production 6/4/07.</i></li> <li><i>WisFIRS public land RECON complete with new variables including enhanced monitoring aspects including reporting on RECON frequency– Recommend demonstration for auditors. Focused training of DNR and County staffs 5/29/07 – 6/15/07.</i></li> <li><i>Wisconsin Wildlife Plan grant application drafted by Loren Ayers aimed at evaluating how current forest conditions and management influences floral, faunal, natural community, habitat attributes, and landscape issues. – This grant application was unsuccessful.</i></li> <li><i>5/14/07 – Meeting of Jeff Barkley, Paul Pingrey, Loren Ayers, and Erin Crain as to potential funding sources for completing this phase of the monitoring. Inquiry made to Bob Mather (Director, Bureau of Forest Management) as to potential for either emergency funding or</i></li> </ul>	

*for future budget packages to try and provide for this work.*

- *6/07 – Distribution of RECON Status and Accomplishment reports to Counties.*

### **SCS Findings:**

The audit team observed that good progress was made on the 3 components of this CAR.

**Currency of Recon:** The county Forest Program demonstrated clear progress on updating Recon over the previous year. Additionally, during the 2007 audit we discussed extending the frequency of Recon for some of the community types, e.g., aspen, tag alder (types either passively-managed or whose management is dependent on age rather than stocking), where a full Recon update is not needed every 20 years. SCS learned that there has been an informal (undocumented) position allowing Recon to extend beyond 20 years for some of the less dynamic forest types. This allows counties to focus their Recon on forest types, e.g., northern hardwoods, where it is important to keep a 20-year cycle. Establishing a clear policy on the Recon update schedule for different forest types is needed. Also of relevance, as described above, WisFIRS will allow better monitoring of Recon status.

**Improved Flora and Fauna Monitoring:** The WI DNR and WCFP have demonstrated progress on this aspect of monitoring. Species lists have been developed from the Wildlife Action Plan for each county forest according to their ecological landtype composition – available at – <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/wwap/plan>. However, WCFP staff seemed unfamiliar with the new species lists and how to incorporate them into forest management. As detailed in Appendix A “Developing the Framework for a Monitoring Program” there is considerable work to be done. The framework to improve monitoring of flora and fauna is in its early stages, and will likely take several years to fully implement. In 2006 the following timeline was provided for meeting the 7 steps of the plan:

- March 2006 to March 2007 – finalize the draft process and seek county support, complete step 1 for all FSC forests
- March 2007 to March 2008 - Complete steps 2-6
- March 2008 - Implement replicable field monitoring (step 7) per the findings of step 6

A proposal to fund this work was not accepted, and has thus slowed the progress. It is critical that continued progress be demonstrated on flora and fauna monitoring.

**Chapter 3000:** Chapter 3000 has been expanded to include reporting of accomplishments. Also WisFIRS, which just became active, allows for quick queries and reporting on a variety of monitoring indicators.

Considering the substantial progress made on items 1 and 3 and the partial progress on flora and fauna monitoring, SCS will close CAR 2006.1. CAR 2007.2 is issued as continued progress on improved flora and fauna monitoring is necessary.

**Status July 2007: Closed. Issued follow-up CAR 2007.2**

### **Recommendations:**

The following recommendations were stipulated at the time of award of certification.

<b>REC 2004.2</b>	<b>Reference:</b> FSC Indicator 5.3.a
Recommendation 2004.2- Counties should consider recruiting aspen for downed woody debris in even-aged management treatments (we observed few large aspen being retained on harvest sites).	
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments</b>	
2006: Not aware of any changes to retention or recruitment policies. 2007: No action taken on this recommendation. See CAR 2007.3	

<b>REC 2004.5</b>	<b>Reference:</b> FSC Criterion/Indicator 6.3(a)3, 6.3(a)5, 6.3(b)1, 6.3(c)3
Recommendation 2004.5: County Forests should develop and implement quantitative guidelines for stand level retention (covering green trees, snags, downed woody debris) to ensure more consistent implementation.	
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments</b>	
2006: No action on this recommendation. 2006 audit showed that this remains an opportunity for improvement, especially in even-aged harvests. 2007: No action taken on this recommendation. This continues to be an area of concern. The recommendation is continued.	

<b>REC 2004.6</b>	<b>Reference:</b> FSC Criterion/Indicator 6.3a
County Forests with high deer densities should set up exclosures to measure deer impacts on tree and herbaceous species.	
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments</b>	
2006: Not aware of any actions on this recommendation. 2007: Counties have been very active in lobbying the State of WI to take additional actions to reduce deer population densities. There has been extensive research on deer impacts, several of which have evaluated exclosures. While WI DNR recognizes the effectiveness of exclosures, they do not see them as cost effective or practical for large scale forest management.	

<b>REC 2004.7</b>	<b>Reference:</b> FSC Criterion 6.5
County Forests should develop and implement clear guidelines or standards for protection of water resources not covered under BMPs (e.g., vernal pool and wetland protection)	
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments</b>	
2006: Not aware of any actions on this recommendation 2007: No actions taken. This continues to be an area of concern. The recommendation is continued.	

<b>REC 2004.8</b>	<b>Reference:</b> FSC Criterion/Indicator 6.9.d
County Forests should develop more pro-active programs for controlling invasive exotics	
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments</b>	

<p>2006: WCFP has taken significant actions to improve upon control of invasive exotics, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invasive Species of the Upper Midwest - E. Czarapata, has been purchased for all Counties as an excellent reference for identification and management.</li> <li>• Training session on Emerald Ash Borer and other invasive species is an agenda item for March 30-31 WCFA Spring Administrator's Meeting (Instructor Jane Cummings-Carlson, DNR Forest Health).</li> <li>• DNR efforts are progressing on invasive species management. The County Forests are participating in an advisory committee for one of the four tracks (Track 1 - Forestry BMP's for Invasive Species) of DNR's effort to develop BMP's for Invasive Species in Wisconsin.</li> </ul> <p>2007: Observed continued progress. Examples of actions taken include continued training, periodic control work, and adding invasive species information to the standard Recon inventory process. Recommendation has been addressed.</p>

<b>REC 2004.10</b>	<b>Reference:</b> FSC Criterion 8.1, 8.2
Add variables to standard recon to allow monitoring of changes to stand-level considerations such as tree grade, species composition (volume and basal area), regeneration density by species, etc. This would allow a better determination of how management is affecting the sustainability of healthy, high quality, forests and products.	
<b>Action Taken By Certificate holder/Auditor Comments</b>	
2006: See response to CAR 2004.9	
2007: The new Recon system has been developed and implemented that can handle many new variables and queries.	

## 2.5 General Observations

All observations are included under the appropriate CAR, Recommendation, or in section 3.1.

## 2.6 New Corrective Action Requests and Recommendations

<b>Background/Justification:</b> WCFP staff have not received training on identification and protection of cultural resources. This component of CAR 2004.8 has yet to be adequately addressed.	
<b>CAR 2007.1</b>	DNR must expand training programs to include protection of cultural resources. Note: "training" does not require formal classes/workshops in every instance; in many cases improving content and distribution of written training material may suffice.
<b>Deadline</b>	2008 surveillance audit
<b>Reference</b>	<i>Criterion 7.3</i>

<b>Background/Justification:</b> Considerable work remains on the plan to improve flora and fauna monitoring.	
<b>CAR 2007.2</b>	WCFP must demonstrate continued progress on implementing the improved flora and fauna monitoring framework as described in

	“Developing a Monitoring Framework”.
<b>Deadline</b>	2008 surveillance audit
<b>Reference</b>	<i>Criterion 8.1 and 8.2</i>

<p><b>Background/Justification:</b> Indicator 5.3.a. states: <i>Adequate quantities and a diversity of size classes of woody debris (considered a reinvestment of biological capital under this criterion—not an economic waste) are left on the forest floor to maintain ecosystem functions, wildlife habitats, and future forest productivity.</i> Also Indicator 6.3.b requires: <i>Well-distributed, large woody debris is maintained.</i> Indicator 6.3.c.1 states: <i>Biological legacies of the forest community are retained at the forest and stand levels, consistent with the objectives of the management plan, including but not limited to: large live and declining trees, coarse dead wood, logs, snags, den trees, and soil organic matter.</i> As noted in previous reports (Rec 2004.2 and Rec 2004.5) we have observed areas that are lacking in current and future woody debris. With emerging biomass markets adding to what are already excellent markets for utilization- we see that there is a potential to push the balance toward excessive utilization. Additionally, there is no readily available information of woody debris levels on County Forests (though estimates could be obtained through FIA data), targets for what County Forests should maintain, or practices/policies to achieve those targets.</p>	
<b>CAR 2007.3</b>	<p>Develop and implement guidelines for woody debris retention/recruitment that address both woody debris for wildlife and nutrient cycling/soil productivity.</p> <p>Note: per the existing recommendation 2004.5- County Forests are encouraged to also establish criteria for retention of the other aspects (beyond woody debris) of stand-level wildlife habitat elements (e.g., green tree retention, mast trees, den trees, and nest trees).</p>
<b>Deadline</b>	<p>Due to the highly technical nature and the numerous parties involved with this assignment, the CAR timeline is divided into the following phases and milestones (as proposed by WI DNR):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. March 2008: DNR will conduct a literature search and draft language.</li> <li>2. June 2008: Council representatives and DNR established teams (such as the Silviculture and Public Lands Specialist Teams) will review draft materials.</li> <li>3. June 2008 – June 2009: Stakeholder input on draft biomass guidelines and possible stakeholder review and input on Forest Management Guideline update.</li> <li>4. June 2009: Council adopts Forestland Biomass Harvesting</li> </ol>

	Guidelines. Biomass guidelines may be incorporated into an update of the Wisconsin Forest Management Guidelines.
<b>Reference</b>	<i>Indicators 5.3.a, 6.3.b, and 6.3.c</i>

## **Recommendations**

In addition to the prior recommendations that remain open, SCS issues one new recommendation.

<b>Background/Justification:</b> The identification of HCVF that has been completed to-date for the WCFP is based on a partial (approx 10%) and non-systematic biotic inventory. It is very likely that unidentified areas that qualify as HCVF still exist.	
<b>REC 2007.1</b>	In the absence of systematic biotic inventories as done on the State Forests, County Forests should look for opportunities to use Recon and other inventory work to continue to identify areas qualifying as HCVF.
<b>Reference</b>	<i>Criterion 9.1</i>

## **2.7 General Conclusions of the Annual Audit**

Based upon information gathered through site visits, interviews, and document review, SCS concludes that management of the Wisconsin County Forest Program continues to be in overall conformance with the FSC Principles and Criteria. However, as described in sections 2.6 there are three open CARs. SCS observed numerous examples of exemplary management on Wisconsin County Forests during the 2007 audit. In conclusion continuation of the certification is warranted, subject to ongoing progress in closing out the open CARs and subject to subsequent annual audits.

## **3.0 DETAILED OBSERVATIONS**

This section is divided into two parts: Section 3.1 details the conformance and non-conformance with the elements of the standard examined during this audit. Section 3.2 discusses any stakeholder comments.

### **3.1 Evaluation of Conformance**

REQUIREMENT	C N	COMMENT/CAR
<b>P2 Long-term tenure and use rights to the land and forest resources shall be clearly defined, documented and legally established.</b>		
<b>C2.1. Clear evidence of long-term forest use rights to the land (e.g., land title, customary</b>	C	It is well documented that County Forests clearly have the long-term right to manage their forests. Property

<b>rights, or lease agreements) shall be demonstrated.</b>		boundaries are appropriately marked prior to timber sales and there is good signage when entering/leaving County Forests.
<b>C2.2. Local communities with legal or customary tenure or use rights shall maintain control, to the extent necessary to protect their rights or resources, over forest operations unless they delegate control with free and informed consent to other agencies.</b>	C	County Forests continue to offer exceptional public use opportunities for a large variety of activities. During the 2007 audit we observed places where County Forests facilitated maintenance activities on snowmobile, equestrian, hiking, and skiing trails. Treaty rights continue to be honored.
<b>C2.3. Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed to resolve disputes over tenure claims and use rights. The circumstances and status of any outstanding disputes will be explicitly considered in the certification evaluation. Disputes of substantial magnitude involving a significant number of interests will normally disqualify an operation from being certified.</b>	C	Monthly Forestry Committee meetings remain as a formal means to avoid and resolve disputes. Also county administrators have a proactive approach toward resolving issues.
<b>P4 Forest management operations shall maintain or enhance the long-term social and economic well-being of forest workers and local communities.</b>		
<b>C4.1. The communities within, or adjacent to, the forest management area should be given opportunities for employment, training, and other services.</b>	C	Counties distribute bid prospectus to a comprehensive list of potential bidders. Counties continue to make sizable contributions to a first-class road system that benefits local communities. Each year County Forests offer up over 15 million dollars in timber sales.
<b>C4.2. Forest management should meet or exceed all applicable laws and/or regulations covering health and safety of employees and their families.</b>	C	All such laws are met. We observed good safety practices during the 2007 audit.
<b>C4.3 The rights of workers to organize and voluntarily negotiate with their employers shall be guaranteed as outlined in Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labor Organization (ILO).</b>	C	These rights are protected. DNR and some county employees are unionized.
<b>C4.4. Management planning and operations shall incorporate the results of evaluations of social impact. Consultations shall be maintained with people and groups directly affected by management operations.</b>	C	Each county maintains regular consultations with people and groups affected by forest management. Examples of consultations include monthly forestry committee meetings, management/access planning meetings, and other day-to-day interactions.
<b>C4.5. Appropriate mechanisms shall be employed for resolving grievances and for providing fair compensation in the case of loss or damage affecting the legal or customary rights, property, resources, or livelihoods of local peoples. Measures shall be taken to avoid such loss or damage.</b>	C	An effective dispute resolution policy is in place.

<b>P5 Forest management operations shall encourage the efficient use of the forest's multiple products and services to ensure economic viability and a wide range of environmental and social benefits.</b>		
<b>C5.1. Forest management should strive toward economic viability, while taking into account the full environmental, social, and operational costs of production, and ensuring the investments necessary to maintain the ecological productivity of the forest.</b>	C	County Forests continue to receive sizable contributions (staff, funds) from DNR. Timber markets in Wisconsin have worsened, but County Forests are still able to sell the majority of their sales. There are no major concerns with this Criterion considering the long track-record of the County Forest Program and the fact that harvest levels are not depletionary.
<b>C5.2. Forest management and marketing operations should encourage the optimal use and local processing of the forest's diversity of products.</b>	C	Optimal use and local processing remain strengths of the County Forest Program. New biomass markets are emerging that will provide additional local markets.
<b>C5.3. Forest management should minimize waste associated with harvesting and on-site processing operations and avoid damage to other forest resources.</b>	C	During the 2007 audit- we observed very little waste and residual stand damage.
<b>C5.4. Forest management should strive to strengthen and diversify the local economy, avoiding dependence on a single forest product.</b>	C	Recreation, multiple species, leases, and other products ensure there is little dependence on a single product.
<b>C5.5. Forest management operations shall recognize, maintain, and, where appropriate, enhance the value of forest services and resources such as watersheds and fisheries.</b>	C	We observed careful attention to water quality issues during the 2007 audit. The County Forest Program still lacks explicit procedures for protecting wetlands and vernal pools (Rec 2004.7), though in most cases foresters afford appropriate protection despite the lack of guidance.
<b>C5.6. The rate of harvest of forest products shall not exceed levels that can be permanently sustained.</b>	C	Based on FIA data, approximately 85% of net growth is harvested

### 3.2 Stakeholder Comment

In addition to the stakeholders listed in section 2.3, SCS had discussions with Loren Ayers and Randy Hoffman of the Bureau of Endangered Resources.

### 3.3 Controversial Issues

No exceptionally controversial or difficult issues presented themselves during this surveillance audit.

### 3.4 Changes in Certificate Scope

Following the 2007 audit, the WI County Forest Program approved the enrollment of Lincoln County (100,845 acres) into the FSC group. SCS was presented with this information, and

officially recognized Lincoln County as part of the group on July 2, 2007. Lincoln County will be audited as part of the 2008 surveillance audit.

## Appendix I

### Appendix B-- **Developing the Framework for a Monitoring Program**

Developing and implementing a comprehensive floral and faunal monitoring program is a highly complex and expensive undertaking that cannot be adequately accomplished in 1-2 years. In order to be effective, monitoring programs must be relevant to current management issues and explicitly linked with decision-making processes, both of which vary across properties, and then integrated within a larger monitoring system to yield large-scale information which is collectively useful. This is especially true with Wisconsin county forests where it would be impossible, even with significant state assistance, for a single property to adequately address all ecological, spatial, temporal, and programmatic aspects of a comprehensive monitoring program. A collective approach will be needed in which the first priority is to maximize utilization of existing data, information, and programs.

The following draft process is being used by the WDNR and WCFA to evaluate existing information and management options prior to establishing new monitoring programs. This process will be subject to significant discussion, review, and revision. Current emphasis is on steps 1 and 3.

- 1) **List known and potential resources within each county forest, including flora, fauna, natural communities, natural features, High Conservation Value Forests, and water resources.**
  - a) Determine Ecological Landscapes and ecological context for each county forest (completed; see Table 1, Figs. 1-3)
  - b) Extract relevant information from Wisconsin's "*Wildlife Action Plan*"
    - i) List vertebrate Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) for each county forest, organized by Ecological Landscape and Natural Community (a 4-county pilot has been completed; see Table 2 – Iron County, Table 3 - Ashland and Price Counties, and Table 4 - Bayfield County)
    - ii) For each county forest, provide relevant SGCN summary sheets which include ranking scores, natural community (habitat) association tables, landscape-level distribution maps, and conservation threats and action information (see samples in Appendix A)
  - c) Link Natural Communities with forest cover types and / or WISCLAND land cover classes.
    - i) The *Wildlife Action Plan* and forest management currently use two different land classification systems. Crosswalks between forest cover-types and natural communities have been attempted in the past; reassess the level of accuracy needed in the conversion and evaluate past recommendations.

- d) Include data, information, and context from the County 15 Year Plans, Wildlife Management, Fisheries Management and Habitat Protection, Fish and Habitat Research, Wildlife and Forestry Research, Forestry, Endangered Resources, Water, WBCI All Bird Plan, and the Ecosystem Management Planning Team (et al.).
- 2) **Identify and provide for statutory requirements** (county forest mandates, threatened / endangered species management, State Natural Area management, etc.)
- 3) **Identify desired attributes, direct and indirect management goals, and potential secondary benefits for non-timber forest resources.**
  - a) Specify and examine existing goals.
  - b) Establish new goals commensurate with resource conservation needs where / when possible
    - i) Direct goals with quantitative, measurable outcomes. Could include the management of X acres of habitat with conditions specifically designed for wildlife or resource conservation (e.g., grasslands for Sharp-tailed Grouse, development or retention of X stems of coarse woody debris per unit area, maintenance of ground water recharge zone)
    - ii) Indirect goals with qualitative, less measurable outcomes. Could include decreasing white-tailed deer preferred habitat (and presumably deer densities) near vulnerable State Natural Areas or natural communities.
    - iii) Secondary benefits. These are not goals per se, but rather recognition and documentation of management practices and goals which are consistent with the needs of certain target species, communities, or forest and landscape conditions.
- 4) **Locate, evaluate, and utilize periodic reports summarizing relevant natural resource research, monitoring, and management information.**
  - a) Wisconsin's EcoAtlas (see Figs 4-6) allows users to locate and retrieve ecological information and data associated with specific topics and areas on the landscape. Available at <http://atriweb.info/EcoAtlas/>.
  - b) Forest Sciences, Wildlife and Forestry Research, Natural Heritage Inventory, Wisconsin's Water Monitoring Strategy, WBCI Coordinated Bird Monitoring program, et al., provide information on species occurrences and trends in natural resources as well as applicable research and management information. Improve awareness and access to this information.
  - c) WDNR will negotiate with the WCFA for the provision of new services related to the synthesis, reporting, and interpretation of resource monitoring information relevant to county forests.
- 5) **Evaluate how current forest condition and management influences flora, fauna, natural**

**communities, habitat attributes, and landscape issues.** A detailed evaluation should identify how existing monitoring and management information can be applied immediately to address compelling issues. This should include all forest cover type, management scenarios, and a select list of species, communities, and environmental parameters (e.g., SGCN, ground water quality).

- a) List and assess known management options.
- b) Identify improvements or additional objectives which can be addressed
- c) Prioritize, select alternatives
- d) Verify presence of target flora, fauna, natural community, or condition
- e) Approve short list, select best alternatives
- f) Implement alternatives via

- i) 15 Year Plans
- ii) Annual Partnership Planning Meetings
- iii) Monthly Forestry Committee meetings
- iv) Wildlife Biologist check of harvest plans
- v) Personal interaction / involvement

- 6) **Assess information and management gaps** a) Specify new or unaddressed taxa, habitat, natural community, and ecosystem-related management issues b) Determine need for new resource monitoring objectives, goals, or programs

- 7) **Develop and implement new monitoring strategies** a) Goals, objectives, priorities b) Integration c) Design, resources d) Implementation e) Reporting